

HORSFORTH URBAN DISTRICT.

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Annual Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health,

FOR

**THE YEAR 1898.**

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HORSFORTH.

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# The Horsforth Urban District Council

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## *Report of the Medical Officer of Health* **For 1898.**

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*To the Chairman and Members of the Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit to you my first Annual Report. In it, I regret to have to describe to you, as its most remarkable feature, the series of epidemics of infectious diseases which the district has had to contend with, more or less, for the whole year. In qualification of this statement, however, I ought to say that your district has not been alone in this respect, for many of the surrounding places have been similarly affected—indeed Scarlet Fever (the most severe of the epidemics) has been prevalent over almost the whole of the West Riding.

In February the Infectious Diseases Notification Act came into operation, and there is no doubt that the adoption of this law will prove a considerable help in preventing the spread of infectious diseases, especially when the cases notified can be immediately removed into the efficient isolation which we hope to have when the Isolation Hospital scheme is completed.

### **Vital Statistics of the Year.**

The POPULATION in 1891 was 7102, and my estimate for the middle of the past year is 7600, and from this number I have consequently made my calculations,

**BIRTHS.**—There have been 211 births registered, 106 males and 105 females. This produces the rather low birth-rate of 27·7 per 1000. Below I show the birth-rate for the last five years :—

1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.
27·9	28·6	30·1	27·3	27·7

According to the vital statistics for the whole of England and Wales there has, for the last few years, been a steady decline in the birth-rate.

**DEATHS.**—134 were registered, 65 males and 69 females, making a death-rate of 17·6 per 1000 per annum. I think this figure, taking into consideration the number of deaths from Zymotic diseases, is very satisfactory. It is certainly the largest death-rate the district has had during the last 5 years, but when I tell you that Zymotic diseases alone account for 3·6 deaths per 1000, you will understand the reason of the above assertion.

Below I give you the death-rates for the last 5 years :—

1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.
15·5	13·6	12·5	16·8	17·6

Also the Zymotic death-rates for the same period :—

1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.
·81	1·8	1·06	1·3	3·6

Concerning the enormous increase of this rate I shall have something to say in the remarks under the heading of Zymotic diseases.

I append two tables (a) of deaths classified according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities, and (b) of Population, Births, and of New Cases of Infectious Sickness.

**Table A.**

MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES AT SUBJOINED AGES						
At all ages	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and upwards.
134	26	20	9	8	39	32

**Table A.—Continued.**

Mortality from subjoined causes, distinguishing deaths of children under five years of age.																					
Age Period.	Smallpox.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Croup.	FEVERS.				Cholera.	Erysipelas.	Measles.	Whooping Cough.	Diarrhoea and Dysentery.	Rheumatic Fever.	Phthisis.	Bronchitis, Pneumonia, and Pleurisy.	Heart Disease.	Influenza.	Injuries.	All other Diseases.	Total.
					Typhus.	Enteric or Typhoid.	Continued.	Relapsing.													
Under 5.	4	3	3	4						2	6	4				12			1	11	47
5 upwds.	2	5			1					1	1	1	1	1	16	10	11	2		36	87

**Table B.**

Population at all ages.			New Cases of Sickness coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health.													
Last Census	Estimated to middle of 1898.	Registered Births.	Age Period.	Smallpox.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Croup	Typhus Fever.	Enteric or Typhoid.	Continued Fever.	Relapsing Fever.	Puerperal Fever.	Cholera.	Erysipelas.	(Croup (not Membranous)	
7102	7600	211	Under 5		33	14	1		1						3 deaths	
			5 upw'ds.		31	31			25	6				9		

Of the deaths from general diseases one need not comment especially, only on those from Phthisis. From this 16 persons died—thus claiming more victims than any other disease. The death-rate produced, viz., 2·1 per 1000 per annum, is the highest yet recorded, as shown below.

1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.
1·1	·5	1·2	1·6	1·4	1·3	2·1

It is also much higher than the similar rate for all England and Wales. The only way in which I can account for this fact, is that many of the older houses in the district are small, damp, and ill-ventilated, and that comparatively few people yet understand the benefits of fresh air and sunlight upon this dread disease. Overcrowding (not coming within the limit to be dealt with by law) is frequently noticed, and it is unfortunate that parents of large families do not yet grasp the fact that the securing of a small rent is often not economy. The dusty occupations, viz., stone working, iron and steel working, etc., at which many find employment, are doubtless predisposing causes of this disease.

The Respiratory death-rate for the year is 2·8 per 1000.

For the last five years it was :

1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.
3·75	3·4	1·7	·8	3·1	2·8

INFANT MORTALITY—26 deaths occurred under one year, producing an infant mortality of 123 per 1000 children born alive. This compares favourably with the previous years :

1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.
113	122	146	122	88	178

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES—Below I give you a table representing the various epidemics together with the months in which they occurred.

	Diphtheria.	Croup	Erysipelas.	Scarlet Fever.	Typhoid.	Continued Fever.	Puerperal Fever.	Measles.	Whooping Cough.	Influenza.	Summer Diarrhœa.
January ...			1							only few cases, 2 de'ths	
February ...			1								
March ...			2	1	1						
April ...	1	1		4	1				height of epidemic in May, 7 de'ths		
May ...	19			5				large epidemic, height in June, 3 de'ths			
June ...	13		1								
July ...	2		1			2					
August ...	1					1					sev, r'l cases in Sept. 2 de'ths
September ...	2		1	8	12	2					
October ...	6			7	7	1					
November ...				7	3						
December ...	1		2	32	2						

ZYMOTIC DISEASES—These include the following diseases, with which are given the number of deaths occurring from the same :

Smallpox	...	...	0
Scarlet Fever	...	...	6
Diphtheria	...	...	8
Measles	...	...	3
Whooping Cough	...	...	7
Diarrhœa	...	...	5
Fever (including Typhoid)			1

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Total 30

As I have previously shown, this produces the large Zymotic Death-rate of 3·6 per 1000 for the year. The comparison with previous years is not encouraging, and when I point out to you that this death-rate for all England and Wales for 1897 was 2·15, and for the West Riding of Yorkshire 1·97, you will understand the enormity of the position. For it must be admitted that the presence of these preventible diseases to such an extent casts much reflection on the sanitary arrangements of the district. Probably the prevailing atmospheric conditions may have been more favourable than usual to the rapid spread of disease, but it is my firm opinion that the district would not have been so severely visited if our sanitary arrangements had been in a better way. One very potent factor, I believe, has been the scarcity of water, which, for the greater part of the year, has prevented anything like efficient flushing of the sewers. But the greatest of all evils, and I have expressed my views before, is the ashpit question, and this requires, I feel confident, still more attention than you have already given it. In consequence of your action some few months ago, nearly 40 of the worst ashpits are being reconstructed or otherwise made satisfactory, but a minute survey with regard to this matter for the whole of the district is still very necessary to allay the many causes of complaint, and to bring the district into a more healthy condition.

It is also my firm conviction that systematic scavenging would do much to minimise the existing evils. It is not at all a rare occurrence to hear of an ashpit not having been emptied for several months, and although lately the scavenging has been done better than formerly, yet there are here and there ashpits to be found in a very full and dirty condition.

It has been proved that the system of giving individual notice to the scavengers does not answer, and I hope that this important work will, before long, be done much more efficiently, for the contents of no ashpit should be allowed to accumulate for longer than six weeks.

In view of the large number of sanitary defects existing in the district, also that in the future the work of the Sanitary Officials will be far greater than it has been in the past, I think that the present time is opportune for the division of the existing joint office of Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor, into two separate ones, and I commend this matter very seriously



to your consideration, for there is no doubt that the district has many natural advantages—as evidenced by our usual low death-rate—and the only requirement necessary to make it a most popular residential locality, is to be quite above suspicion in everything pertaining to sanitary matters.

My contention is that this cannot be done without additional help.

I will now deal separately with the various Epidemics.

**SCARLET FEVER**—As you are well aware, Scarlet Fever has been very prevalent in the district. It began in March, but until September only 7 houses were infected, and these were in different parts of the district. From none of these first cases could infection be traced; the district being reported free at the end of June. Unfortunately, shortly after this, an epidemic of measles overspread the whole of the district, and at the same time there occurred some cases of Scarlet Fever, which were not recognised as such until desquamation commenced, or until some complications arose which necessitated medical attendance, the clue to the true state of affairs being then discovered. As you will readily understand, after this the disease spread rapidly, especially in the Woodside area, so much so that at the end of the Christmas holidays I recommended the schools to be closed for a further 4 weeks. Altogether 39 houses were affected.

Great sloughing of the tonsils, showing the malignant type of the disease, was one of its chief characteristics. The want of anything like efficient isolation helped materially to increase the epidemic. It was not until October though that the epidemic assumed alarming proportions, and the height was not reached until December, as shown in the table of Zymotic Diseases. Altogether 6 deaths occurred, averaging 9·37 per cent of the persons affected. This shows in a practical manner the severity of the epidemic.

At the commencement I discussed with you the various preventive steps to be taken. Isolation for the whole of the cases was found impracticable, so the services of a trained nurse were secured; it was thought that she would assist to nurse the cases, and at the same time instil into the minds of those she came in contact with, the importance of the

preventive measures that could be adopted. I need scarcely tell you that her services were found invaluable, and were much appreciated by the patients.

The mode of infection has been brought about, undoubtedly, in almost all cases, by direct or indirect contact with infected persons.

**DIPHTHERIA**—For the past nine months the district has not been clear of this disease. The first case occurred in April and unfortunately for some things, was a mild one. Isolation in consequence was much neglected, and the disease spread. The locality was Tanhouse Hill, but when the epidemic had made headway, the following parts of the district were mostly affected:—Corn Mill Fold, Troy, and Bachelor Lane; all districts well known to you as being in an unsatisfactory sanitary condition. In my second quarterly report you will perhaps remember how I attributed the rapid spread of this disease to infection received at St. Mary's School, Broadgate Lane. It was in consequence of this that I advised closure of these schools for two periods of three weeks each. 45 cases were notified, and 8 deaths occurred, making a death-rate of 17·7 per cent. Considering the severity of the epidemic, I think the death-rate is not very high. There is no doubt that the comparatively new treatment of injecting with antitoxin has modified this to a very considerable extent. In 26 cases of which I have record, the first 8 were treated without antitoxin, and of these 3 died. The remaining 18 were all injected early, and no deaths occurred—proving conclusively the merit of the preparation.

At the end of convalescence all the houses were stoved by your Sanitary Inspector.

**TYPHOID AND CONTINUED FEVERS**—During the year 32 cases of these diseases were notified, resulting in 1 death. The majority of the cases were of a mild character; 14 occurred in September, and 8 in October. It is extremely difficult to ascribe any general cause as the origin of the disease. No milk supply was suspicious, and there was no evidence that the infection had been carried by means of water. My own impression is again that the insanitary conditions of the parts mostly affected accounted for much; for we notice that Bachelor Lane, Lister Hill, Long Row, Gaunt's Fold,

and Finkhill, were picked out, and in all these, insanitary conditions exist. In order though, at this time, to allay our feelings on the point, the town's water was again forwarded to Messrs. Reynolds and Branson for analysis. The result proved satisfactory. It should also be observed that for some weeks before this epidemic occurred, the Yeadon Water Company had been supplying the whole district, and as no cases had arisen in Yeadon, it was unreasonable to suspect this mode of infection.

**MEASLES**—An epidemic of this disease occurred in June, affecting first the Woodside area, and finally extending over the whole township. It was deemed advisable to close the Woodside National School early, and later it became necessary to act similarly with the Horsforth National, and the Wesleyan Schools. The epidemic on the whole, in addition to being very general, was in many cases severe, and 3 deaths occurred from chest complications. In many cases the infected houses were stoved after convalescence.

**WHOOPIING COUGH**—Along with many of the surrounding districts, Horsforth had its share of Whooping Cough. This happened in the second quarter of the year, and resulted in 7 deaths. The mortality shows the necessity of treating Whooping Cough as one of the most serious diseases that sanitary authorities have to deal with.

**INFLUENZA**—This disease was prevalent in early spring, and accounted for 2 deaths—both in old people. On the whole, the epidemic was neither so general, nor so severe in character as in former years.

### **General Characters of the District, &c.**

Horsforth Urban District is principally a residential locality for Leeds and Bradford, containing 2,801 acres. Situated on the North side of the River Aire, about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the former city; it lies for the most part on steep ground, having a clayey and sandy subsoil in most places. It is bounded on the South side by the Aire, on the East and West by the Horsforth Cow Beck and Gill Beck respectively, and the North by the Yeadon Urban District.

It is, with the exception of a narrow portion extending in the direction of West End and Scotland Lane, entirely on Mill Stone Grit, the latter being on the coal measures.

The Township consists mainly of one long street, over a mile in length (lying between the Midland and N.E.R. Stations) with off-shoots of houses in various directions. This extends in an irregular manner over the brow of the highest portion of the district, and around the base lie Woodside and Newlay—the next most populous parts. Cragg Hill lies on a higher elevation close to Newlay.

In Horsforth proper	the population is about	4980.
„ Woodside	„ „ „	1350.
„ Cragg Hill	„ „ „	860.
„ Newlay	„ „ „	410.

Altogether there are 1854 houses, of which about 60 are uninhabited at the present time.

Rateable value £22,279 13s. 6d.

Value upon which the General District Rate is assessed.

Full Rateable Value (Houses, &c.)	One-fourth Rateable Value (Land, &c.)	Rate in the £ (1898).
£14,891 4s. 3d.	£1,878 0s. 6½d	4/-

### Water Supply.

The supply for the whole year has been very defective. This has been due mainly to the exceptional draught of the seasons, causing great scarcity. Leakages being suspected, many of the mains have been examined for such, and there is no doubt that the leakages found have contributed in a minor degree, to the above state of affairs. Fortunately the Water Company were able to take advantage of their connection with the Yeadon Supply, and thus the township did not suffer to the extreme degree it otherwise would have done.

The quality of the water to the naked eye has been at times bad, but this has been chiefly due to the altered current of the Yeadon Water bringing away with it a quantity of the deposit lining the Company's pipes, and has persisted only until the water has been allowed to run waste for a time.

On several occasions samples of water have been sent to Messrs. Reynolds & Branson for analysis, and it is satisfactory to note that a distinct improvement upon previous analysis is the result. The amount of organic matter is slightly in excess of what it should be, but "this appears to be of vegetable origin. In all other respects the water is suitable for domestic use." In another report the analyst remarks "It is fairly free from organic matter, and may, in our opinion, be safely used for domestic purposes."

During the year the Water Company have done many things which must have a beneficial effect in improving the purity of the water. These have been chiefly the following:— (1) Cutting off the valve connecting the compensation reservoir with the mains, (2) improving the conditions at Bayton Beck in order to prevent pollution from road washings, (3) taking better care of the tilling of the gathering grounds, preventing the use of night-soil, and (4) cleansing and protecting some of the feeders from the intrusion of cattle.

There is no doubt that the stream at Bayton Beck would have been better protected had the pipes used been whole ones, and in time of floods it seems possible for the road washings still to reach the Beck if for any reason the grate provided should become blocked up.

The reservoirs at the present time are almost full, so that a plentiful supply is assured for some time to come.

The Water question has been one of considerable difficulty to the Council for many years. Happily though, in the last quarter, a public meeting of the ratepayers was called to sanction the wish of the Council to proceed to the attainment of powers to compulsorily purchase the Waterworks. The action of the Council was approved of, and there is now every probability of the water supply being in the hands of the Sanitary Authority in a short time to come.

### Sewerage.

The main part of the district was sewered in 1883, at a cost of over £14,000, and extensions have taken place from time to time, to meet the growing requirements of the locality. The larger sewers are egg shaped brick culverts, the smaller ones being constructed of glazed and socketed pipes, with joints of cement. The ventilation of sewers is provided by means of



roadway grids, and there are manholes or openings at every bend or junction, as there are also at changes of level. Flushing is carried out by means of 3 automatic discharging tanks, situated respectively at the 3 higher ends of the main sewer. During the year there has been one elevated ventilator put up at the top of the North end of Broadgate Lane. I would recommend an increase in this form of ventilation, especially at junctions of streets where people congregate, or near schools where the children playing over the open grates, must inhale the fouled sewer air. The sewer extension during the last year was about 42 yards in Lee Lane.

Newlay remains yet not properly sewered, but plans for this are now with the Local Government Board.

### **Sewage Disposal.**

The Sewage for the main part goes untreated into Cow Beck, within about 70 yards of its entrance into the R. Aire. The remaining portion, viz., about 20,000 gallons per day, is treated by means of 8 bacteriological beds, which have been constructed in order to prove experimentally the value of the process. This system has been found to answer very well, and now an application is before the Local Government Board to borrow a sum of money necessary to deal permanently with the whole of the sewage. £300 was spent on the experimental beds, and £8000 is applied for with the understanding that included in this sum the efficient sewerage of Newlay is to be done.

### **Refuse Disposal and Scavenging.**

This is partly done by water carriage, and partly by the aid of privy middens.

The following table gives a detailed account :—

Water Closets	...	...	186.
Trough Closets	...	...	5.
Slop or Waste Water Closets	...	...	6.
Pan or Pail	...	...	6.
Covered Privy Middens	...	...	313.
Uncovered Privy Middens	...	...	210.

36 Water Closets have been constructed during the year, and 2 covered privy middens. It is very gratifying that the superiority of water carriage over any other system is becoming so generally appreciated.

There is much abuse with regard to the use of privy middens. It should be thoroughly understood that neither slops nor vegetable matter should be placed therein, and that it is only by such extreme care that this system of refuse disposal is anything like satisfactory. Bills setting forth the above facts, and threatening legal proceedings to defaulters, were issued by the Council, but I believe without any appreciable good resulting. I have previously stated my views on systematic Scavenging.

The total costs for the Scavenging Contracts during the year was £236.

### **Burial Grounds.**

5 in number, viz., (1) the Cemetery, (2) the Old Church Yard on the Green, (3) the Burial Ground at Cragg Hill, (4) the Burial Ground in Church Road, and (5) the Burial Ground of Woodside Church.

The Cemetery is the principal place of interment. It was opened in 1881, and comprises 6 acres, nearly three-fourths of which are still unused.

The total number of interments during the year was 117.

### **Slaughter-houses.**

There are 13 in the District—one having been built off Town Street during the year. The condition of some of these is fairly satisfactory, and the offal might be better disposed of in many cases.

### **Lodging Houses.**

There are no common lodging houses in the District.

### **Cowsheds.**

There are many defective ones, and these need a minute survey. Want of sufficient light and ventilation, and imperfect drainage are the principal causes for complaint.

The present time of the year is a suitable one for the Cowsheds Committee to visit some of these places.

### Offensive Trades.

During the latter part of the year, Messrs. Hess, of the Grease Works, Newlay, were summoned by the Sanitary Authority for a nuisance arising from their works. The stench created was ordered to be abated, and this to a very great extent has been done. However, if the wind be in a favourable quarter, there is still much to complain of.

I am indebted to Mr. Walker, our Sanitary Inspector, for the following details of nuisances :—

No. of nuisances dealt with	...	53.
.. .. abated	...	23
.. .. in hand	...	16.
.. .. unabated	...	14.

One summons was taken out, but was withdrawn on payment of costs and abatement of nuisance.

I should like to take the opportunity here of stating the fact that the Notification of Infectious Diseases Act has increased the work of the Sanitary Officials very considerably, especially of Mr. Walker, who has, I can assure you, done his work in a most conscientious manner.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

HENRY BAILEY, L.R.C.P., Lond.,  
M.R.C.S., Eng.,  
M.O.H.





